



Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

COVID + Family Updates 12.29.2020

Dear Family and Friends:

The pandemic has disrupted our lives in so many ways – especially our holiday traditions that normally bring us such comfort and joy. We hope you are able to feel all the love and gratitude we at Veterans Home have for you throughout the holidays and all year long.

COVID-19 Updates:

Since our last update, we have learned that one employee has tested positive for COVID-19, but one employee has recovered. This means we currently still have 2 active cases.

Here is our current and cumulative information:

Current Active COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Current Active COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	0
Cumulative COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	34 (Four members, three contracted individuals, twenty-seven employees)
Cumulative COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Total Recovered Individuals:	33 (three members, twenty-seven employees, three contracted individuals)

Our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan follows guidance from local, state, and federal health officials. It ensures we're doing everything possible to protect those who live and work in the Veterans Home. See below for the full plan.

As a reminder, testing for all members and staff for COVID-19 continues twice per week. We plan to conduct additional testing to quickly be able to isolate any positive cases to ensure safety for all during this holiday season.

Even though the cases are lower in our community than earlier, we all cannot let our guards down. Please remember to stay safe for your sake, your family's sake, and the members' sakes. Wear your masks, keep at least 6 feet of distance, and frequently wash your hands. We are in this together.

COVID-19 Vaccine Consents & Insurance Card

COVID-19 Vaccination consent forms were sent out late last week to any activated power of attorney for health care or legal guardians. Please review the information and send back the 2 forms with signatures before January 7th. In addition, if you haven't gotten us the member's insurance cards, please do so. Contact Katie Plendl or Sally Blodgett if you need an alternate or electronic way to send in the card.

The first round of vaccines are scheduled for January 15th at the Veterans Home for members and staff.

Wisconsin Exposure Notification App

It will take time to fully distribute the vaccine. In the meantime, a new mobile app called [WI Exposure Notification](#), is live to assist in notifying contacts of people who've tested positive for COVID-19. The voluntary app helps with contact tracing by letting Wisconsinites know faster if they've been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, allowing them to take steps to keep themselves and those around them safe. It does not use, collect, or store any GPS data or personal details. Instead, it uses Bluetooth technology to anonymously share Bluetooth signals with other smartphones using the app nearby. All people who test positive in Wisconsin will receive a code to enter into their app, which will then notify other devices their phone has shared Bluetooth signals with during the period of time they may have been contagious.

The app is another tool in our toolbox for helping stop the spread across Wisconsin. The more people that use it, the more effective it will be. Here is a link for more information on how to enable this app on your phone: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/notification.htm>

Questions:

If you have any questions, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov.

Sincerely,
Megan Corcoran

Veterans Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan

First and foremost, our priority is to keep everyone safe and healthy. We are in close contact with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials to ensure we are taking all appropriate steps at this time. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state and local health officials to protect our members and staff from this virus, and are taking every action possible to prevent it from spreading in our care community.

The following is a summary of our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan.

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by CMS guidelines. Staff continues to wear PPE, including masks, eye protection, gloves, and gowns depending on the community's COVID-19 status. Members are asked to wear a face covering when interfacing with others or when out of their rooms.
- Screening and monitoring members and staff for symptoms. We have increased our screening and monitoring of members and staff for COVID-19 symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

We all play a part in keeping ourselves and others healthy. Please wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wear a mask or face covering, and practice social distancing.

We continue to educate members and staff on COVID-19. For additional information, please visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html or the Wisconsin Department of Health's website at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov.

- Tracing individuals who come in contact with anyone affected. The community will work with the tracing staff from state and local health departments to assess all who may have come in close contact with an affected individual. We will continue to follow all requirements in implementing the next steps which may include self-monitoring as determined by health officials.
- Testing members and staff for COVID-19. We are following all guidance from federal, state and local health officials on testing required for members and staff. The frequency of routine testing is determined based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the local county. Additionally, those who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms are tested to quickly identify and isolate members and staff who may be positive for COVID-19. Once there is a confirmed COVID-19 case, testing is increased to every three to seven days until testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or members for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.
- Quarantining COVID-19 positive members and implementing enhanced infection control measures. We have established a designated area in the building for any COVID-19 positive members, and they are cared for and supported by designated staff. We continue to follow all infection control protocols as outlined by the CDC, CMS, and state and local health officials. COVID-19 positive members remain in quarantine until well and cleared by medical professionals, as well as meet the CDC symptom-based criteria for return to normal activity.
- Advising COVID-19 positive staff to take all appropriate measures. For the health and well-being of our care community, any staff member with a COVID-19 diagnosis is asked to quarantine at home, contact a medical provider for care, and notify their supervisor. We are following CDC guidance on the return-to-work criteria for health care professionals with confirmed COVID-19.
- Taking environmental safety precautions. Housekeeping staff continues to take extra measures to clean and disinfect all high-touch areas throughout the building. This includes countertops and tables, faucet handles, toilet flush handles, doorknobs, door handles, crash bars, bathroom and kitchen areas, elevator call buttons, and handrails.
- Adhering to safe visitation procedures. We are committed to offering visitation that supports each member's physical, mental, psychosocial well-being, and quality of life. Visitation may be conducted through different means based on the community's structure and members' needs.

Please know the visitation options may vary based on the community's COVID-19 status. To discuss current visit options and schedule a visit with a loved one, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or at Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov. Currently as of today, closed window visits and virtual visits are available. No reservation is needed for a window visit.

Closed Window Visits: Closed window visits pose no risk of virus transmission.

Virtual visits: We encourage loved ones to communicate with members by phone, letters, video chat, and/or social media. We understand that it is hard to not have visitors, especially family.

Please contact the community at 715-720-6775 for questions or assistance with these communication methods.

Compassionate care visits: Visitors who need to enter the community for compassionate care situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure safety for all.

Please note the community will screen visitors for COVID-19 when they arrive for compassionate care visits.

We are excited to see our members reunite with their loved ones, when able!

- Assuring safe congregate dining and group activities. Communal dining and congregate group activities may be offered while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention. This includes social distancing, face covering, and appropriate hand hygiene by members and staff.

We continue to be in close communications with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials. We are also monitoring new information from the CDC, CMS, and state and local health departments to ensure we are taking the appropriate next steps.

Thank you for your support and understanding; we are all in this together. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Plendl, Director of Admissions and Marketing at 715-720-6775 or Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best,



Megan M. Corcoran, NHA | Administrator
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls